

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

MAJOR-GENERAL RICHARD MONTGOMERY,

OF THE

CONTINENTAL ARMY,

WHO FELL IN THE ASSAULT OF QUEBEC, DECEMBER 31, 1775.

BY

GEORGE W. CULLUM.

BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL U. S. ARMY.

1876.

254 FIFTH AVENUE,
New York City, Oct. 20, 1876.

DEAR SIR :

By request, I prepared a brief Biographical Sketch of Major-General Richard Montgomery for the Convention of Authors and Antiquarians which met at Philadelphia to commemorate the Centennial day (July 2, 1876) of the Signing of the Declaration of our Independence.

Since then I have visited Quebec, and have carefully examined all the localities connected with the assault of that city, December 31, 1775. To present the results of these observations, and to correct some errors fallen into on supposed good authority, I have re-written the whole Memoir, which I now present to you with the request that you will return to me the previous imperfect copy, if I sent you one.

Yours very respectfully,

GEO. W. CULLUM,
Bvt. Major-General, U. S. Army.

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MAJOR-GENERAL RICHARD MONTGOMERY.

On the last day of the year preceding that of our Declaration of Independence, there fell one of the noblest martyrs to liberty—MAJOR-GENERAL RICHARD MONTGOMERY—whose death was mourned by friends and foes, and whose memory, after the lapse of a century, still lives in the grateful hearts of the millions of freemen of this giant Republic, whose foundation was sprinkled with his blood.

Richard Montgomery, the second son of an Irish baronet, was born December 2, 1738, at Conway House, his father's country seat, near Raphoe, in the north of Ireland. After receiving a liberal education at Dublin College, he, in his eighteenth year, entered, September 21, 1756, the British Army, as an Ensign of the Seventeenth Infantry, being soon after called to the field. Fortunately for America his career opened here, and not in the Seven Years' War of Prussia. In 1757 his regiment was ordered to Halifax, and the next year took part, under the immediate command of General Wolfe, in the capture of Louisburg, the American Gibraltar guarding the entrance to the St. Lawrence from the Atlantic. During the investment and siege of this great fortress, one of the most noted monuments of French power on this continent, young Montgomery showed such heroism and military capacity that he was promoted to be a Lieutenant, July 10, 1758.

The news of Montcalm's bloody repulse of the British attack upon Ticonderoga, July 8, 1758, having reached General Amherst at Cape Breton, he, after leaving proper garrisons both at Louisburg and at Halifax, without orders, hastened to the relief of the defeated Abercrombie with five of his most efficient regiments, including the seventeenth. Landing at Boston, September 13, Amherst marched for fourteen days through an almost trackless wilderness to Fort William Henry, at the head of Lake George; and, in November following, was appointed to supercede Abercrombie in the chief command of the British forces in America.

The next year England, anxious to profit by the advantage acquired by the capture of Cape Breton, decided upon a vigorous campaign, by sending Stanwix to complete the occupation of the posts connecting Lake Erie with the Ohio; Prideaux to reduce Fort

Niagara; Amherst to move upon Montreal by Lake Champlain; and Wolfe, with a large force supported by a fleet, to attack Quebec.

Leaving Fort Edward, at the head of the Hudson, June 21, 1759, Amherst, with eleven thousand men, including Montgomery's regiment, without a blow, took possession of Ticonderoga, July 26, and of Crown Point, August 4—both posts having been abandoned by the French. These strong works, the keys to the defense of Lakes George and Champlain, which had been the bone of contention in several campaigns, thus fell into British possession, the banner of the Bourbons never again floating over them. The road to Montreal by the Sorel could now have been easily opened; but Amherst was a mediocre general, without fertility of resource or the daring enterprise of Wolfe, who fell in the arms of victory, September 13, 1759, before Quebec, nobly accomplishing his part of the campaign.

Though Amherst's operations were unproductive of great results, it gave Montgomery the opportunity of surveying with his quick military eye the field of his after glory in a nobler cause. We have assumed that Montgomery was with his regiment, which formed a part of Amherst's army, though many authorities to this day assert that he was at Quebec. It is barely possible that he was detached from his regiment, as he was a favorite with Wolfe, for whom he had done such gallant service at Louisburg; but we think it almost certain that he was with the seventeenth, under Amherst, and that he has been confounded with some one of the thirteen officers of the same name then in the British army, two of whom—George, an Ensign in the fifteenth, and the barbarous Alexander,* Captain of the forty-third—were at the capture of Quebec.

Authorities equally differ as to Montgomery's position in the next campaign, of 1760, of which Montreal was the objective point of the three British armies by which Canada was subjugated: the first, under Amherst, making an absurd and dangerous flank march of 400 miles by the circuitous route to Oswego and down Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence; the second, under Haviland, by the

*Some years since, the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, published an Extract from a Manuscript Journal, relating to the Operations before Quebec in 1759, kept by Colonel Malcolm Frazer, then Lieutenant of the 78th (Frazer's Highlanders), and serving in that campaign. Under date of August 23d, 1759, is recorded in the Journal: "We were reinforced by a party of about 140 Light Infantry, and a company of Rangers, under the command of Captain Montgomery, of Kennedy's or 43d Regiment, who likewise took command of our detachment, and we all marched to attack the village to the west of St. Joachim, which was occupied by a party of the enemy to the number of about 200, as we supposed, Canadians and Indians. * * * There were several of the enemy killed and wounded, and a few prisoners taken, all of whom the barbarous Captain Montgomery, who commanded us, ordered to be butchered in the most inhuman and cruel manner." The Editor of the publication, not content to let the Journal speak for itself, appended a note stating that the Captain Montgomery here spoken of was "*The Leader of the forlorn hope who fell at Pres de Ville, 31st December, 1775,*" thus falling into the grave error of confounding the noble Lieutenant Richard Montgomery, of the 17th, with the brutal Captain Alexander Montgomery, of the 43d. Doubtless this unfortunate note, published under the sanction of an Historical Society, on the very spot where these events transpired, has done much to perpetuate a mistake now almost crystalized into history as a truth.

true strategic line of the Sorel, of less than 50 miles; and the third, under Murray, up the St. Lawrence from Quebec. As Montgomery became the Adjutant of his regiment in the spring of this year, May 15, 1760, we have little doubt that he then was, and had been, present with it since its departure from Louisburg, and in this campaign accompanied Colonel Haviland over the same ground made so memorable by his after invasion of Canada in 1775, which we shall soon detail.

America, north of the St. Lawrence and the Lakes, having changed masters, a large British force was no longer required there; hence detachments from it were sent against the French and Spanish West India Islands of Martinique and Cuba, the former of which surrendered, February 13, 1762, to Monckton and Rodney, and a portion of the latter, including Havana and Moro Castle, August 12, 1762, to Albemarle and Pococke—two events which doubtless hastened the Treaty of Versailles, February 10, 1763, and confirmed Britain's possession of an empire in North America. In these two campaigns of 1761 and 1762, in the deadly climate of the West Indies, Montgomery had his full share of toil and danger, reaped fresh laurels as a brave and accomplished soldier, and won his promotion, May 6, 1762, to a full Captaincy in his regiment. ✓

Soon after the official announcement of peace, the Seventeenth Infantry returned to New York, and Montgomery obtained permission to revisit Europe, where he remained for the next nine years, selling out his commission, April 6, 1772. Of the reasons for his leaving the British Army, and his occupation during this period of military inactivity, we have few details. But we know that he was intimate in England with the brilliant Burke, the fascinating Fox, and the bold Barré, his fellow British soldier wounded at Quebec, all of whom, in Parliament, were the ardent advocates of America in her severe struggle against the oppression of the mother country. Doubtless the influence of this distinguished trio gave form and pressure to a mind already in sympathy with the colonists, with whom he had stood shoulder to shoulder in five eventful campaigns.

Montgomery, no longer in the British service, returned to America early in 1773; purchased a farm at King's Bridge, near New York; soon after married Janet, the eldest child of Judge Robert R. Livingston, and then moved to Rhinebeck, on the Hudson, where he followed his new vocation of agriculture with that zeal and intelligence which characterized all his actions. Here, though a foreigner, he quickly gained the confidence of his neighbors, and so proved himself equal to the exigencies of the times that, in April, 1775, he was elected a delegate from Dutchess County to the first Pro-

vincial Convention held in New York, of which he was a useful, modest and taciturn member, not having acquired the modern mania for speech-making. But the forum was not his sphere, and fortunately he was called to a higher and more congenial field of action.

The Continental Congress having resolved on armed resistance to the oppression of the mother country, elected, June 15, 1775, George Washington commander-in-chief of all the colonial forces, and Horatio Gates, adjutant-general; on the 17th, Ward, Lee, Putnam and Schuyler, major-generals; and on the 22d, Pomeroy, Montgomery, Wooster, Heath, Spencer, Thomas, Sullivan and Greene, brigadiers. Of the three selected from those who had been officers in the British army, Montgomery, though perhaps inferior to Charles Lee in quickness of mind, was much superior to both him and Gates in all the great qualities which adorn the soldier.

The high distinction conferred upon him by the supreme authority of the colonies, without his solicitation or privity, was accepted by Montgomery with his characteristic modesty, a patriotic sense of duty, and a strong presentiment of his swift-coming fate. Writing to a friend, he says: "The Congress having done me the honor of electing me a brigadier-general in their service, is an event which must put an end for a while, *perhaps forever*, to the quiet scheme of life I had prescribed for myself: for, though entirely unexpected and undesired by me, *the will of an oppressed people, compelled to choose between liberty and slavery, must be obeyed.*" From that hour he was no longer a Briton, but, with heart and soul, devoted himself to the service and glory of the land of his adoption.

Ticonderoga and Crown Point had been captured by Colonel Ethan Allen and Seth Warner, in May, 1775, thus giving us the command of Lake Champlain, when Congress, aware that Canada was weakly defended and had a large discontented French population, wisely resolved upon the invasion of that province, thus to prevent its becoming a base of hostile operations against us by the armies of Great Britain. According to the plan of campaign devised by General Washington and Doctor Franklin, Generals Schuyler and Montgomery, at the head of a body of New York and New England troops, were to seize Montreal, the approach to which was barred by the strong fortifications of St. John's and Chambly, on the Sorel, the outlet of Lake Champlain to the St. Lawrence, while Arnold marched through the wilderness of Maine.

On the 26th of August the movement began down the placid waters of the beautiful Champlain Lake, which, for nearly two centuries, had been the scene of long campaigns and desperate battles. On the 6th of September the invading army appeared before the first

of these barriers, effected a landing, and defeated an Indian ambuscade; but Schuyler, deceived in regard to the strength of the garrison of St. John's, and the disposition of the Canadians and Indians, fell back to Isle aux Noix, which he commenced fortifying, and then hastened to Ticonderoga for reinforcements. In reporting these transactions to Congress, General Schuyler says: "I cannot estimate the obligations I lie under to General Montgomery for the many important services he has done and daily does, and in which he has had little assistance from me, as* I have not enjoyed a moment's health since I left Fort George, and am now so low as not to be able to hold a pen."

In consequence of this sickness Schuyler retired to Albany, the command of the whole invading force devolving upon Montgomery, who hesitated not a moment, but abandoning his island intrenchments was, on the 18th of September, again before St. John's, of which he began the investment and siege. Having accomplished the first, as best he could, he began the latter, but soon he found his mortars defective, his artillery too light for breaching, his ammunition scanty, his artillerists unpracticed, his engineer incompetent, the ground too wet and swampy for trenches, the weather cold and rainy, malaria producing much sickness, and his troops disaffected and insubordinate. To escape these unfavorable circumstances, Montgomery proposed to move to the north-west side of the fort, where the ground was firm, and from there to make an assault; but the troops refused to second their leader, and to crown his embarrassment, the expedition of the restless Ethan Allen against Montreal had terminated, September 25, in the capture of himself and many of his detachment. At length, however, Montgomery by his firmness and address succeeded in carrying out his views of moving his camp to the higher ground, and soon after, December 13, Colonel Bedel, with Majors Brown and Livingston, captured Fort Chambly, which, being twelve miles lower down the Sorel, had been left with a feeble garrison. This was an important event, as large supplies of ammunition, artillery and military stores fell into Montgomery's hands, which enabled him to press the siege of St. John's. This strong work capitulated November 3, after a vigorous defense of nearly seven weeks, all hope of succor from Governor Carlton having been destroyed by his defeat, October 31, at Longueil, by the detachment under Colonel Warner.

Immediately the Americans pressed on towards Montreal, which was abandoned, November 12, to the triumphal entry of Montgomery; but Governor Carlton, disguised as a peasant, escaped in a canoe with muffled paddles, passing on a dark night the American batteries and armed vessels without observation, and reached Quebec, on the 19th,

to the great joy of the garrison, who placed every confidence in his well known courage and ability. When the news of Montgomery's brilliant success reached Congress, he was promoted, December 9th, 1775, to be a Major-General; but his untimely death prevented his ever receiving the just reward of his merits.

Though now master of one of the most important keys to Canada, not a moment was to be lost in gaining possession of the other, for, as Montgomery wrote to Congress, "Till Quebec is taken Canada is unconquered." Notwithstanding the severity of the weather, the desertion of many troops, the insubordination of officers, and a multitude of discouragements, he led on his band of three hundred patriots over frozen ground and drifting snows, keeping alive their hopes, and cheering them on to endure every hardship, by his own noble example of self-sacrifice and heroic devotion to his adopted country. Soon, November 17, he learned that the adventurous Arnold had completed that memorable march—one of the most wonderful on record—with his half-starved, freezing army, through deep swamps, trackless forests and tangled ravines, over craggy highlands and difficult portages, and down the rushing rapids of the Kennebec and the Chaudière. After a brief delay before Quebec, Arnold marched up the St. Lawrence to join Montgomery. On the 1st of December the two heroes met at *Pointe aux Trembles*, twenty miles above the city, Montgomery taking command of the combined force, now only nine hundred effective men, with which, on the 4th, in the face of a driving snowstorm, he marched on Quebec, and on the 5th, after a slow and excessively fatiguing march, reached St. Foye, establishing his headquarters at Holland House.

He was now in sight of the goal of his ardent wishes, to reach which for three months he had endured every species of toil and suffering. In his brief campaign, almost unsurmountable obstacles had been overcome, and victory after victory had crowned his heroic efforts. Ticonderoga, Crown Point, Forts St. John's and Chambly, Montreal, Sorel and Three Rivers had all been captured by less than an ordinary brigade of American recruits, whose march seemed irresistible, and whose prowess spread terror everywhere. The Canadian peasantry believed them invincible and ball proof, by a curious mistake they being represented as "incased in plate-iron"—*vetus en tôle*, instead of *vetus en toile*—clothed in linen (the shirt uniform of Morgan's riflemen.*)

* In the early part of the Revolution part of the troops assumed the dress recommended by Washington—a hunting shirt and long gaiter breeches—made of tow cloth steeped in a tan vat until it reached the color of a dry leaf. This was called the shirt uniform, or rifle dress, and was supposed to carry no small terror to the enemy as the insignia of a thorough marksman.

The Red Cross of St. George now floated solitary on the ramparts of Quebec, for Levi, Sillery, St. Foye, Lorette, Charlesbourg, the Island of Orleans, Beauport, and every inch of British territory around the city were in possession of the invaders. It was a proud moment for Montgomery when he contemplated all this, and surveyed the historic grounds around him—in front, the Plains of Abraham, where Wolfe and Montcalm had joined, September 13, 1759, in their death struggle; on either side the battle field of St. Foye, where six months later, April 28, 1760, the vain-glorious Murray had nearly lost all that British valor had won; and beyond, with its clustering associations of nearly two centuries, the fortress capital of Canada, whose capture would perhaps crown him conqueror of British America.

Quebec, at the confluence of the St. Lawrence and St. Charles rivers, in 1775, was divided into the Upper and Lower Town, the former, occupying much the larger area, being perched upon the summit of a huge, high rock, and mostly enclosed with formidable fortifications on the brow of its precipitous sides, while the latter comprised a narrow, low fringe of land, of unequal width, between the base of the rock and the banks of the two rivers. This citadel of British power was provisioned for eight months, was armed with two hundred pieces of heavy artillery, had a garrison of 1,800 regulars, militia and marines, and was commanded by the brave, cautious and accomplished General Guy Carleton, afterwards Lord Dorchester.

Investment of the place was out of the question, with only 800 Americans to guard the numerous avenues leading to the enemy's extensive works. Siege was equally impracticable, as there could be no sapping and mining in the hard frozen soil, covered with deep snow-drifts; besides, Montgomery had no skilled engineer, nor any breaching artillery. He had contemplated storming the fortifications from the first, for writing to the Hon. R. R. Livingston, from Montreal, Montgomery says: "If my force be small, Carleton's is not great. The extensiveness of his works which, in case of investment, would favor him, will, in the other case, favor us. Masters of our secret, we may select a *particular time* and *place* to attack, and to repel this the garrison must be prepared at *all times* and *places*; a circumstance which will impose upon it incessant watching and labor by day and by night; which, in its undisciplined state, must breed discontents that may compel Carleton to capitulate, or perhaps to make an attempt to drive us off. In this last idea there is a glimmering of hope. Wolfe's success was a lucky hit, or rather a series of lucky hits, All sober and scientific calculation was against him, until Montcalm,

permitting his courage to get the better of his discretion, gave up the advantages of his fortress and came out to try his strength on the plain. Carleton, who was Wolfe's quartermaster-general, understands this well, and, it is to be feared, will not follow the Frenchman's example."

Preliminary, however, to a *coup de main*, it was necessary to know the character and extent of the enemy's works, his means of introducing supplies, the strength and composition of the garrison, and the disposition of the inhabitants of the city and vicinage. These precautions consumed precious days of the mid-winter of a boreal clime, which was now upon our benumbed handful of besiegers, among whom mutiny and small-pox prevailed, and whose enlistment would in a short time expire. Montgomery, almost in despair, summoned the city to surrender, but received no response; he paraded his troops before the place, but Carleton was not to be drawn from behind his defenses; and the discontented Canadians of the garrison dared not rebel in the presence of the British soldiery. Resorting next to more active measures, Montgomery threw every night from thirty to fifty shells from his five small mortars into the city; but these doing little damage, he erected at 700 yards, in front of St. John's Gate, a battery for his five light guns and one howitzer, the platforms being cakes of ice, and the epaulment made with gabions filled with compacted snow congealed into a solid mass. This too, owing to the distance and small calibre of his guns, failed of success, the battery being soon demolished by the enemy's superior artillery, which kept up an effective fire upon every point where troops were to be seen. On one occasion, as Montgomery was reconnoitering near the town, the horse which drew his cariole was killed by a cannon ball.

Weeks had now been spent in unavailing efforts to capture the city, biting cold and drifting snows paralyzed almost every movement, sickness and privations were producing mutiny, and perils on every hand were gathering around the undaunted leader in that terrible campaign; but his noble soul rose superior to every misfortune, and sustained him with the same moral grandeur which inspired Marshal Ney till the last of the rear-guard of Napoleon's Grand Army had escaped the pursuing foe and the deadlier rigor of a Russian winter.

In a council of war, held December 16th, it was resolved, as the only remaining alternative, to carry the place by storm. As the time for assault drew near, three companies of Arnold's detachment mutinied; but Montgomery's firmness and address soon brought them

back to a proper sense of their duty. Finally, at two o'clock on the morning of the last day of the year, the whole command was paraded, in three columns, for the last dread trial. The plan, essentially different from that first adopted and abandoned when disclosed by a deserter, was for the first and second divisions to assault the Lower Town, then to meet and unitedly force their way into the city through the picketed passage at the foot of Mountain street, since 1797 known as the Prescott Gate; while the third, under Livingston and Brown, was, from the Plains of Abraham, to alarm and distract the attention of the garrison by feigned attacks upon the Upper Town, in the neighborhood of St. John's and St. Louis' Gates and Cape Diamond bastion. The morning was dark and gloomy, a violent pelting storm of cutting hail almost blinding the men, and the drifting snows obliterating all traces of highways. To recognize each other, the soldiers wore hemlock sprigs or pieces of white paper in their caps, on which some of them wrote: "LIBERTY OR DEATH." A more daring attack than that which they were about to undertake is, perhaps, not on record upon the page of history.

At five o'clock the two assaulting columns of Montgomery and of Arnold began their march. Arnold's division, himself leading the advance guard of 30 men, followed by Lamb's piece of artillery mounted on a sledge, and the main body of about 500 infantry and riflemen, under Morgan, moved through the suburb of St. Roch, by way of St. Charles street, near the river. The advance-guard approached a picketed two-gun battery defending a barrier across the road, without being discovered, but the main body had scarcely reached the Palace Gate when "a horrid roar of cannon and a ringing of all the bells of the city" sounded the alarm. Covering the locks of their guns with the lappets of their coats, to protect them from the pelting storm, the infantry and riflemen ran single file, in very open order, as rapidly as the deep snow and the various obstacles would permit, along the base of the high rock upon which the Upper Town was built. The files, though thirty or forty yards apart, were exposed to a terrible fire from the ramparts, to which no reply could be made, as only the flash of the enemy's guns was to be seen. Arnold's forlorn hope attacked and carried the battery after a desperate resistance, in which he was severely wounded, and had to be carried to the hospital. Though encouraging the men as he passed to the rear, the ardor of the main body was much dampened. Nevertheless they hurried forward under the severe enfilading and plunging fire of the garrison, to the attack of the first barrier, which was carried, the embrasure being entered "when the enemy were discharging their guns."

From the first to the second barrier there was a circular course of about 300 yards, partly through Dog Lane, opening into the head of Sault-au-Matelot street, where the second barricade closed the space between the foot of the rock and the river bank. Here a terrible contest took place, the enemy having dry and superior arms; in front, a shot-proof cover twelve feet high; behind, two tiers of musketeers, supported by an elevated battery of artillery; on either side, houses giving a plunging fire from their upper windows; and re-inforcements continually arriving from the other parts of the town now unexposed, for already Montgomery had fallen, Campbell, his successor was in flight, and the "dastardly persons employed to make the false attacks" had signally failed. Efforts to scale the barrier were made in face of the desolating fire of musketry and grape; the platform within was emptied by our unerring riflemen; Morgan, Arnold's successor in command, brave to temerity, stormed and raged; all that valor could do was essayed; the killed and wounded literally choked the defile; but human efforts could not prevail against such surpassing odds. Now it was that Morgan, seeing the Quixotism of this unequal hand to hand encounter, ordered the occupation of the houses on our side of the barrier, that our men might be better screened and maintain a more effective fire. It was already daylight, and many of the best officers and men had been killed or wounded; hesitation and doubt seized many of the survivors; and the critical moment for the last cast of fortune was allowed to pass, when Captain Laws, at the head of 200 of the garrison, sortied from the Palace Gate, cutting off the retreat of the Americans, nearly four hundred of whom were captured, the remaining survivors having escaped across the ice covering the Bay of St. Charles.

At the same time that Arnold's division began its march, Montgomery, who could not be dissuaded that the commander-in-chief should not expose his life in the advance, descended from the Plains of Abraham, at the head of his column of less than three hundred, to the cove where Wolf landed in 1759, and then led his forlorn hope, in Indian file, cautiously along the margin of the St. Lawrence toward the very narrow pass of *Pres de Ville*, having a precipice towards the river on one side, and the scarped rock extending up to Cape Diamond on the other. Here all further approach to the Lower Town was intercepted by a barrier, and the defile, only wide enough for two or three abreast, was swept by a battery of three-pounders loaded with grape, placed in a block-house. At daybreak, Montgomery's approach was discovered by the guard and Captain Barnsfare's gunners, which had been kept under arms awaiting the attack which

they had reason to expect from reports of deserters; and, as had been previously concerted, the Americans were allowed to approach unmolested to within fifty yards. Montgomery, while the rear of the column was coming up with the ladders, halted to reconnoitre in the dim dawn darkened with the driving northeast storm. Deceived by the silence of the enemy, who, with port-fires lighted, were eagerly watching for his approach, Montgomery cried out to his little band, as soon as about sixty were assembled: "Men of New York! you will not fear to follow where your general leads; march on, brave boys! Quebec is ours!" and then rushed boldly to charge the battery, over the drifted snow and blocks of ice, some of which he cleared away with his own hands, to make room for his troops. The enemy, waiting for this critical moment, discharged a shower of grape and musketry, with deadly precision, into the very faces of the assailants. Montgomery, pierced with three balls, his Aide, Macpherson, the gallant Captain Cheeseman, and ten others, were instantly killed. For several hours after the repulse of the American column Carleton was uncertain as to Montgomery's fate; but a field officer among the captured troops of Arnold's detachment recognized among the thirteen frozen corpses, *lying as they fell*, in their winding sheets of snow, the heroic leader of the Spartan band.* Through the courtesy of Carleton, the commanding-general of the British forces, the body of Montgomery was privately interred, January 4, 1776, at the gorge of St. Louis bastion. His short and light sword, of which he had thrown away the scabbard, was found near him by James Thompson, overseer of public works in the royal engineer department at Quebec, who, dying at the age of ninety-eight years, bequeathed it to his son, who in turn willed it to his nephew, James Thompson Harrower, who has deposited "this famous escalibur," for safe keeping, in the mu-

*The oft-repeated story that Aaron Burr attempted to carry away the body of Montgomery has been handed down by Trumbull's pencil, and recently renewed with much exaggeration in Par-ton's biography of him; nevertheless, we believe it to be an error, and even doubt whether he was with Montgomery's column, though his friend, Matthew L. Davis, generally accurate in his statements, says, "General Montgomery [when he fell] was within a few feet of Captain Burr."

Burr, disguised as a Catholic priest, had been sent by Arnold to convey to Montgomery, when at Montreal, the information of his near approach to Quebec. Pleased with Burr, Montgomery temporarily attached him to his staff, and had designed that he should lead, with forty men, an assault upon Cape Diamond bastion. When this first plan was frustrated by its being disclosed to the enemy by a deserter, Burr probably joined his old commander, believing more glory was to be gained under the impetuous Arnold than under the brave but cautious Montgomery. In confirmation of this is Arnold's own letter to General Wooster, written from the hospital where he lay wounded, and while the assault of Quebec was yet in progress. He says: "The last accounts from my detachment, about ten minutes ago, they were pushing toward the lower town. * * * * * The loss of my detachment before I left it was about twenty men killed and wounded. Among the latter is Major Ogden, who, with Captain Oswald, *Captain Burr*, and the other volunteers, behaved extremely well." This certainly implied that Burr was with Arnold's column, and not with Montgomery's, which was a mile away. Possibly Burr assisted Arnold to the hospital, but certainly he did not move Montgomery's body from where it fell and was found, "two paces from the brink of the river, on the back, the arms extended," close to Cheesman and Macpherson, and two privates.

X
See also Burr's account of the battle of Quebec, 1776.

seum of the Literary and Historical Society, at Morrin College, Quebec.

"Brief, brave, and glorious was his young career,—
His mourners were two hosts—his friends and foes ;
And fitly may the stranger lingering here
Pray for his gallant spirit's bright repose ;
For he was Freedom's champion, one of those,
The few in number, who had not o'erstept
The charter to chastise which she bestows
On such as wield her weapons ; he had kept
The whiteness of his soul, and thus men o'er him wept."

Looking now upon the attack of Quebec simply as a problem of engineering, it is questionable whether the false attacks should not have been real, and the latter feints. By the plan adopted, Montgomery and Arnold had each to force their way, for about a mile, through the Lower Town, during a violent storm, by narrow, obstructed defiles, and amid dark, intricate passages, among store-houses, boats, wharves and snow drifts, at the same time being harassed by a constant plunging fire of a continuous line of fortifications, which could not be silenced ; then to make a second attack by either escalading the walls, or forcing one of the gates of the Upper Town ; and perhaps even a third attack upon the redoubt which then occupied the site of the present citadel—*three* extremely difficult and dangerous operations ; whereas, had Diamond bastion and the incomplete line of defenses fronting the Plains of Abraham, between it and St. John's Gate, been simultaneously assaulted, the Upper Town would probably have been carried, and then the Lower Town would have offered no resistance—*one* not extremely hazardous operation, considering the state of the garrison and the extent of the works to be defended against dashing, desperate men. Doubtless it was expected that the storm and darkness would prevent the discovery of the march of the columns, but the event proved what ought to have been expected of a vigilant garrison, commanded by an observant and thoughtful officer, who, in fact, knew of the intended attack eight days before it was made. Soon after the troops were in motion their approach was known by the sentries, and before they had reached the first barrier every bell in the city was tolled, the drums beat to arms, the inhabitants were running to the market place, and every soldier was at his post, ready with cannon and musket to repel the assailants.

The death of Montgomery made a profound impression, both in Europe and America. The Continental Congress proclaimed for him "their grateful remembrance, profound respect, and high veneration, and desiring to transmit to future ages a truly worthy example of

patriotism, conduct, boldness of enterprise, insuperable perseverance, and contempt of danger and death," caused to be executed by Caffières, sculptor of Louis XVI, a monument of white marble, of the most beautiful simplicity and graceful proportions, with emblematic devices, and a classical inscription written by Franklin, which, since 1789, has adorned the front of St. Paul's church, in the city of New York.

Forty-three years after Montgomery's death his remains, of which the skeleton was found complete, by a resolution of the Legislature of the State of New York, were removed from Quebec, and buried, July 8, 1818, near the cenotaph erected by Congress to his memory. As the body was borne down the Hudson river, the steamer, as directed by Governor Clinton, paused before "Montgomery Place," near Barrytown, where the widow of the hero resided, and who thus describes the mournful pageant: "At length they came by with all that remained of a beloved husband, who left me in the bloom of manhood, a perfect being. Alas! how did he return? However gratifying to my heart, yet to my feelings every pang I felt was renewed. The pomp with which it was conducted added to my woe; when the steamboat passed with slow and solemn movement, stopping before my house, the troops under arms, the Dead March from the muffled drums, the mournful music, the splendid coffin canopied with crape, and crowned by plumes, you may conceive my anguish. I cannot describe it. Such voluntary honors were never before paid to an individual by a republic, and to Governor Clinton's munificence much is owing."

Of Washington's thirteen generals, elected by the Continental Congress, some were mere sabreurs, many incompetent, and several effete from sickness or age; two only—Schuyler and Greene—could be compared to Montgomery, and neither of these was his superior in character, attainments or military experience. Of such materiel as Montgomery, Napoleon made the marshals of his Empire, for he was as intrepid as Ney, as steadfast as Macdonald, as fearless as Massena, as prudent as Soult, as resolute as Davoust, as self-poised as Suchet, and as impetuous as Lannes, ever ready to lead in the forefront of battle to do or die for his country. It must be ever lamented that a spirit so elevated and so devoted to the cause of liberty should have been sacrificed, in the bloom of manhood, in a conflict so unequal and so hopeless of success. Winkelried met not a more glorious death, nor did Austrian pikes, at Sempach, pierce a braver heart than that of the noble martyr of Pres de Ville, worthy to rank among the first of heroes and patriots.

Montgomery was the embodiment of the true gentleman and chivalrous soldier: high-born, handsome in person and athletic in form, graceful and simple in manners, modest and taciturn in speech, generous and frank in disposition, loving to kindred and fond of his fireside, of sanguine temperament tinged with melancholy, cultivated in taste and studious of books, self-reliant and of sound judgment, faithful to duty and zealous in its performance, just to all for a high moral sense was his guide, firm of will in carrying out his convictions, true to friends and generous to foes, brave as a paladin and the soul of honor—he united every manly attribute to the gentleness and affection of woman.

His letters to his wife, amid all his difficulties and sufferings, are those of a knightly lover, sighing and longing to worship at the altar of his household gods. Though a soldier from boyhood, he delighted in the calm pursuit of agriculture, and reluctantly bade adieu to his “quiet scheme of life” only because “the will of an oppressed people, compelled to choose between liberty and slavery, must be obeyed.” When he resumed his sword in the cause of our independence, he shrank from no danger, evaded no responsibility, energetically performed every duty, imparted his own confidence and courage to all about him, won the love and esteem of his soldiery, and tempering authority with kindness, checked insubordination, removed discontent, and converted a disorderly band of turbulent freemen into a disciplined army of patriots. He was truly a “servant of humanity, enlisted in its corps of immortals,” and his heroic end was the amaranthine crown to his useful and unsullied career.

“Death made no conquest of this conquerer,
For now he lives in fame, though not in life.”



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